

An Integrated Program for Career Development

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To prepare people to be able to take advantage of opportunities for advancement as they come along, a career development plan has been designed which provides for identification of significant growth potential. Its objective is to create programs through which qualified people can "grow" within their own abilities and interests.

TO SOME people, career development implies that someone is going to do something to someone else to make that someone grow and flourish. But that would be somewhat like the novice gardener who tries to make his young tomato plants grow fast and straight up the pole by pulling on them from the top. At best, nothing happens. At worst, given enough pressure, the plant is uprooted and withers.

The only hope for successful growth and career development is to provide a nurturing environment in which an individual can, by working hard, take maximum advantage of his inherent potential. "Working hard" and "inherent potential" are important phrases here. The first because no true growth can occur without effort, and the second because no amount of nurturing can grow a tomato from a weed.

Another common myth associated with career development programs is that one chooses, or has chosen for him, a specific position as a career goal and then follows clearly defined steps to reach that goal. Even if someone possessed the omniscience to make such a determination, the fact is that:

- People change as they develop. New desires, interests and abilities are created

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which may make the predetermined position an inappropriate goal.

- Organizations also change over time, so that the position itself may become non-existent.

Keeping these facts in mind, it becomes evident that any system designed to enhance the career development of individuals must be dynamic. It must be capable of responding to change. It cannot exist as a separate entity, but must be an integral part of the business organism in order to take advantage of all avenues of development as they open up.

The only hope for successful growth is in a nurturing environment in which an individual can take maximum advantage of his inherent potential.

Finally, it must be a financially sound program, providing a maximum return on investment. IBM Field Engineering's integrated program for career development is an attempt to meet these criteria. It addresses, specifically, the career development of managers from first line supervisor to the executive level.

IDENTIFICATION

The first, fundamental requirement in any good career development program is to know where—in which individuals—to concentrate your efforts. Just as the gardener cultivates and fertilizes in the immediate vicinity of his tomato plants, the businessman concentrates his nurturing efforts where they can be expected to produce the best results.

There is, of course, no "manager detection device," through which we can parade all employees and listen to a bell ring each time an incipient manager passes through. However, there are a number of devices, contributed by the behavioral sciences, which can help to improve the odds of identifying management talent significantly above the chance level.

The use of tests and testing procedures in
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selecting managers has a long history. For nearly 3,000 years, ending as recently as 1905, the Chinese employed competitive examinations for the selection of all public officials.

It is not within the province of this article to evaluate "civil service" examinations systems. However, it is apparent that the success of any career development program leans heavily on the reliability and validity of the tests employed.

TEST IDENTIFIED POTENTIAL (TIP)

A research study conducted at IBM over a period of more than seven years has shown that it is possible, using a battery of tests, to identify promotable individuals early in their career with a success ratio significantly better than chance. The TIP program, for Test Identified Potential, is based on this study.

The battery of tests is administered under standardized conditions subsequent to employment during a basic training period. Tests results are forwarded, unscored, to the Personnel Development and Research staff function. This centralized agency is responsible for scoring the tests, making appropriate predictions based on the results and establishing a confidential follow-up system. The expectation is that those individuals predicted to be promotable on the basis of their test scores will have been selected within approximately a two-year period to participate in the Assessment program, which is discussed below.

If this doesn't happen, the executive level of management is made aware of the possible existence of potential and assures that the individual has been given an opportunity to display his talents. However, no attempt is made to force-fit him into a selection pattern based on test results alone.

Any system designed to enhance the career development of individuals must be dynamic.

It should be emphasized that any inquiries about the individual are made very discreetly.

It is most important that the individual and his direct management are not made aware that he is being paid any particular attention. The objective is to assure that talented individuals are not overlooked, not to create a halo effect which could lead to inappropriate selection.

ASSESSMENT

Another technique, used extensively by AT&T and a number of other companies to identify management potential, is the Assessment program, for which individuals may be selected at any stage of their career.

This is a combination of paper and pencil tests and situational exercises, observed and evaluated by trained line managers. As a result of performance in this program, a judgment is made regarding an individual's capacity for growth in management.

Assessment has been used in our career development program in a number of different ways. Over 400 individuals, already in first or second level management positions, have been assessed in the period 1964-1970. Careful records of results have been maintained and the progress of individuals has been monitored over the six year period. An expectancy chart, based on change in responsibility level over time, of individuals assessed during the first two years of this period is shown in Figure 1.

Predicted	Bottom	Actual Middle	Top
Top	0	33%	67%
Middle	18%	68%	14%
Bottom	89%	11%	0

Actual vs. predicted position level progress for 142 managers assessed between 1964 and 1966.

FIGURE 1

For those individuals whose performance in the Assessment program resulted in a prediction that they would end up in the top third of the group in terms of management advancement, none of them ended up in the bottom third. Conversely, of those seen as having minimal potential, none ended at the top and 89% finished in the lower third.

It is evident that nurturing the individual predicted to be in the top category will produce a significantly higher return on investment than a "scatter-gun" approach. In our career development program, the assessment results were used as a selection device to expose managers to a significant out-of-company developmental experience, which will be covered later.

Another use of the assessment technique is to identify young, nonmanagement individuals with a potential for significant future growth. Here assessment is used to select individuals to enter an accelerated training program, designed to get them into the management main stream rapidly. This will also be discussed in the section on Development programs.

It is possible, using a battery of tests, to identify promotable individuals early in their career.

Both of the preceding assessment techniques rely upon line management selections for candidates. That is, line managers are periodically asked to select individuals to participate in one of the two programs based upon their evaluation of the individual's potential. In this way, current performance and individual line manager judgments are made a part of the selection process.

As should be evident in all of the identification devices discussed so far, primary emphasis is on a combination process in which the first-hand experience of immediate management is supported and reinforced with data from the behavioral sciences. The net result is a system which identifies, in general terms, a group of employees who have potential for moving up into management ranks. But more is needed. If we are going to stimulate the growth of individual careers, it becomes important to identify, insofar as it is practical, areas of interest, ambition and competence within each individual.

In this regard, the role of effective appraisal

and counseling by the individual's immediate manager cannot be overstated. It is essential that regularly scheduled, periodic meetings take place between an individual and his manager for the express purpose of setting personal goals for the individual and establishing strategies to attain them. Any system which purports to concern itself with career development is, in the final analysis, completely dependent upon the existence of an effective, individual appraisal and counseling program.

MANAGEMENT REPLACEMENT PLANNING

One effective way to stimulate line managers to think about the career development of their people is to institute a requirement for systematic consideration of replacement candidates for all managers. That is, each manager of managers must identify, in advance, individuals whom he considers potentially qualified to replace each of the managers reporting to him. This concept plays a significant role in our Integrated Program For Career Development.

Semi-annually each manager is required to list all managers reporting to him and identify one or more replacement candidates. The replacement candidate may come from within the manager's department or he may be working in another department. In either event,

A development plan for an individual must identify the positions for which the individual is considered.

the approval of his choice by the next two levels of management is required. The idea here is, of course, to plan for orderly management succession. All too often, replacement candidates for a management position aren't given any thought until the vacancy occurs. By planning ahead, opportunity is provided to invest specific training where needed in order to assure that a qualified replacement exists. This is straightforward planning for career development, and also insures orderly management succession.

Some interesting by-products are obtained from this semi-annual updating of management and executive resource records. A section of the form used may be seen in Figure 2.

Certain basic information is required for each individual listed as an incumbent or a replacement. One such item is an assessment of the individual's promotability by his immediate manager. By promotability is meant the individual's ultimate potential in terms of an established coding system. The coding system conforms with the previously mentioned as-

PRESENT INCUMBENT						REPLACEMENT POSSIBILITIES							
Name, Initials Location #	Serial	Promotability Mo/Yr	Relocation Mo/Yr	Appraisal Mo/Yr	Assigned	Name, Initials, Loc. # Position Title & Code	Serial	Level	Mo/Yr Ready	Mo/Yr Relocation	Promotability Mo/Yr	Appraisal Mo/Yr	Assigned
Position Title		Code		Level									
Position Title		Code		Level									

FIGURE 2

assessment coding system so that it is possible to compare potential ratings for each manager in terms of his assessment performance and in terms of his current manager's evaluation. Over time, a history of evaluations of individual potential is created for use in establishing the appropriateness of planned development activities.

Along with promotability, the manager is required to enter the current performance appraisal rating of each incumbent and designated replacement possibility. This helps focus attention on individuals by highlighting differences and inconsistencies between potential ratings and current performance ratings.

The whole subject of job enrichment is fundamentally the creation of a growth promoting environment.

To help control the major upheavals resulting from too frequent relocation, the date of last relocation as well as the date of assignment is included. In our career development programs, a minimum two-year time period is imposed between assignments which require physical relocation. Chief executive approval must be obtained to bypass this safeguard.

Management replacement planning, in addition to being a systematic review of management resources, acts as a promotion recommendation system. That is, any manager may enter an individual's name as a replacement possibility for a specific position at any time. It is simply necessary to obtain two additional levels of management approval, completing the prescribed form in the process.

To increase the utility of the information, it is entered into a data bank. Executives are provided with security codes which allow access to the information from remotely located terminals. Thus, if an executive has a management opening in his organization, he may immediately obtain a current list of candidates who have been recommended for that position by checking the data bank. This gives the

executive a wider choice of candidates and is one of the reasons he is motivated to make the system work.

To assure that the management replacement planning is more than an exercise in bureaucratic paper work, each executive is expected to be able to provide a reasonable explanation for management replacement activity which occurs outside the system, i.e., where managers are replaced by individuals not previously listed as placement possibilities.

INDIVIDUAL DEVELOPMENT PLAN

All managers who have replacement candidates listed in the management replacement records are encouraged to complete, annually, a personal development plan for each of these individuals. In these plans, specific actions are identified which will improve and strengthen the qualifications of the individual for the specific positions for which he is considered a candidate.

The plans are formalized, requiring management approval. This tends to assure that action will be taken to address the development needs of each individual. A copy of the form in part, is shown in Figure 3.

In setting forth a development plan for an individual, a manager first must identify the positions for which the individual is considered to be a candidate. This is done with specific reference to the employee's interests and aspirations, as well as the manager's assessment of his competence and possible ultimate potential. Specific factors which lead the manager to believe the individual is promotable must be included in the plan.

He also is asked to establish the development needs of the individual. That is, in the light of the manager's experience with the individual, what experience, education or other personal improvements may be required to assist the individual to fully capitalize on his potential? Finally, a specific development plan is established which addresses the development needs previously identified. The plan requires that a time be set for the actions proposed and a responsible agency or individual be identified who will implement the proposed action.

PRESENT POSITION RESPONSIBILITIES:

OVERALL PERFORMANCE RATING:

DATE OF APPRAISAL:

EMPLOYEES INTERESTS AND ASPIRATIONS:

PROMOTABILITY (List positions to which promotable either now or within 2-3 years. Project when ready for each):

POSSIBLE ULTIMATE POTENTIAL:

EXPLANATION OF ABOVE RECOMMENDATIONS (Comment on accomplishments, personal attributes and mgmt. abilities which are responsible for your evaluation. Be specific):

DEVELOPMENT NEEDS (What education, personal improvement, or other functional / divisional experience would increase his potential for advancement?):

DEVELOPMENT ACTIONS ACCOMPLISHED IN PAST 5 YEARS: (List major development actions accomplished with month & year completed.)

DEVELOPMENT PLAN (Additional actions planned? When? Responsibility of?):

PREPARED BY

DATE

REVIEWED BY

DATE

MO4-0063-3

FIGURE 3

Individual Development Plan is forwarded to the major executive responsible for the organization. Here, the plan is evaluated in terms of data from assessment from other previously mentioned identification programs and terms of its financial implications. Upon approval, the Individual Development Plan becomes the working document to assure that individuals with potential for growth are given appropriate developmental opportunities. Some of the specific actions which can be included in these plans follow.

DEVELOPMENT

There are three general categories of activity which can be planned to stimulate individual development. The first of these is, of course, the work experience itself. All too often we look for special, external experiences outside the job for development when, in fact, the unique experience associated with the work itself can be a most productive form of development. To be effective it requires enlightened management, ready to delegate responsibility, capable of providing effective feedback and counseling, and willing to take the risk of an occasional subordinate failure. The whole subject of job enrichment, usually associated with the phrase, "employee motivation", is fundamentally the creation of a nurturing, growth promoting environment.

Secondly, development activities can take on a more-or-less formal aspect of specific skill development and training. That is, an individual may require, for effective career development in his direction, the acquisition of a specific skill. Most development plans focus on this type of activity because they can be sold easily. A plan predicated on development of a skill is very salable because it is easily understood. The need can usually be demonstrated graphically and the results are readily apparent.

Third, and finally, development may take the more subtle form of a general education type activity. The term education is used here to connote the acquisition of broad, general knowledge about a subject, as opposed to training which, in this context, connotes skill

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development. The results of education are, all too often, not immediately and dramatically apparent. As a result, it is frequently overlooked in a development plan and is generally the first category to go over the side in a financial crisis. However, the unique contribution that development activities classified as "educational" can make is significant.

Our Integrated Program For Career Development utilizes activities in all three of these categories.

WORK EXPERIENCE

Development plans within the framework of job and unique work experience have capitalized on the existence of what Warren Bennis, now President of the University of Cincinnati, calls "temporary organizations". The use of task forces to address specific management problems in an organization has proliferated in the last several years. A task force assignment can offer a unique opportunity for individual development. To realize the full benefits from such an experience, however, requires more than simply assigning the individual to the group. The individual, his manager and, where practical, the task force chairman should meet beforehand to agree upon individual developmental objectives, as well as operational outcomes expected from the assignment. These developmental objectives are reviewed, upon completion of the assignment, in the same way that operational objectives are reviewed. A key part of the process, the feedback loop, must be closed by the task force chairman. It is his responsibility to provide each individual on the task force with a constructive critique before the task force is closed out. This, of course, is simply good management in providing effective counseling in current assignment—but it pays off in personal development.

Another job associated development activity, closely related to the task force assignment, but of longer duration, is the rotational assignment. The Integrated Program For Career Development searches out individuals who can benefit from a change in assignment. Certain criteria are imposed on this selection. The individual must have been performing satisfactorily in his current assignment for a minimum of two years. Furthermore, he must be identified as having potential for significant additional growth. Individuals selected for rotational assignment form a pool within which attempts are made to match assignments to development requirements. When a match is found, rotational assignments are negotiated. Key to the success of this program is the requirement of at least two years of satisfactory performance, coupled with a potential for significant growth. This assures that the development is being invested properly, and tends to prevent the use of the program as a "lateral transfer" mechanism for managers to use in solving a management problem.

An accelerated on-the-job training program is available for young nonmanagement individuals.

Finally, an accelerated, on-the-job training program, called the Personal Development Program, is available for a select group of young, nonmanagement individuals. As previously mentioned, these individuals are chosen, through the assessment program, based on their demonstrated capacity for significant future growth. Their entry into the program is initiated by attending a special 40 hour classroom training session during which they acquire an understanding of the program objectives and an overview of the organization. Following this, they are assigned to an operating unit to follow a highly structured on-the-job training program designed to assure their exposure to a wide variety of experiences in preparation for their eventual promotion to first line manager. This promotion is not

automatic, but depends upon their successful completion of the training assignments and upon the availability of an opening. It generally occurs between one and two years after they enter the program.

SKILL DEVELOPMENT

The second, general category of activity to be found in a development plan involves training and the growth of special skills. Within our Integrated Program, an extensive, in-house series of management development programs is conducted for the express purpose of addressing the skills development and training requirements of individual managers. These programs range from a two-week course for all newly promoted first line managers to a series of specialized modules of shorter duration covering the specific needs of experienced managers. Programs dealing with the specific operating and business requirements of the organizations are conducted, as well as more generalized skills oriented sessions, such as those using videotape techniques to improve presentation and public speaking capabilities.

To supplement the in-house development programs, selective use is made of some of the out-company experiences such as those offered by AMA and other training organizations. A list of available courses is published for line management use. Centralized control of these out-company experiences is maintained in order to prevent oversubscription in any given class, to maintain fiscal responsibility and, finally, to assure that the projected program is appropriate for the developmental needs identified.

In order to evaluate the usefulness of these out-company experiences, each attendee is required to submit a formal critique of the program upon completion. A special form and questionnaire are used which provide a continuing evaluation of the quality of each program.

GENERAL EDUCATION

The third category of development activity—education—involves the exposure of individuals to a broad spectrum of knowledge, not

necessarily related directly to the job. This apparent lack of relevancy frequently makes it very difficult to justify the expenditure of management time and money. There is little doubt, however, that education does have a long-term payoff in terms of improved management decision-making capabilities.

There is also some statistical support for this position. A study conducted within the framework of the Integrated Program for Career Development found that, among first line managers, the average performance rating of college men was higher than non-college men. Of course, one must be cautious in applying cause-effect relationships with this kind of data. It is entirely possible that some intervening variable could account for the fact that the same individuals who achieve a high job performance rating also are the ones who complete college.

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It stands to reason, however, that the individual who is equipped with a broad spectrum of diverse learning, who has been exposed to the thoughts of the great thinkers and who has learned to interrelate data from different disciplines, will tend to be flexible in his thinking. The individual who is limited in his thinking to an extrapolation of his own past experience soon becomes rigid and stereotyped. As Alvin Toffler points out in "Future Shock", we are in a phase of ever-accelerating change. The one thing that we can't afford in our management is rigid, stereotyped thinking.

In terms of personal growth and development, exposure to the academic world can be an awakening, vitalizing experience, particularly for people in middle management positions. These individuals are, generally, in an

age bracket and position which Dr. Herbert Klemme of the Menninger Foundation describes as a major point of change in life style. During this period a transition is made from the relatively materialistic striving of the young man on his way up to the self-actualizing activities of the mature adult who is seeking personal fulfillment. A real education experience at this time can facilitate the transition and result in significant growth for the individual.

One such program is conducted within the Integrated Program For Career Development. Experienced managers are selected, through the Assessment program previously mentioned, to attend a summer institute, covering eight weeks of full-time study, conducted by a leading university. During this period the managers become students in every sense of the word. The program is highly concentrated, covering the equivalent of a semester of work in subjects such as Philosophy, Psychology, Economics, Political Science, Art and other liberal arts disciplines.

The faculty reports, and experience confirms, that people participating in this program are highly motivated, actively participating in class work and, in the words of one of the professors, "They are like sponges—soaking up everything you can put out".

One hundred and forty-two managers have been given this opportunity over a six year period. Without reservation, enthusiastic corroboration of the value of this experience has been voiced by managers attending the program. In some instances, individuals have continued in a formal education program in night school, on their own. Changed reading habits and patterns are common. It is clear that considerable individual personal development has occurred.

Several other approaches to facilitate educational activity by selected employees are a part of the Integrated Program For Career Development. In one case, an individual may be granted an educational leave of absence to pursue a full-time course of study related to his present position or his potential development. During this leave, he receives no pay.

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but continues to accrue tenure. Upon successful completion of the course of study, he is reinstated with continuous service credit.

A second approach, for individuals selected on the basis of their potential and the applicability of the course of study to the job provides partial salary support during an educational leave. Furthermore, tuition and related school expenses are paid for by the organization.

Finally, provision is made to allow selected graduate students to pursue their educational objectives on a part-time basis. In this case complete salary support and tuition are provided, as well as some limited time off the job. The student is, of course, expected to make a substantial contribution of his own personal time.

In summary, an Integrated Program For Career Development provides for identification of significant growth potential, the establishment of a plan for personal development and the implementation of that plan based on the availability of a specific variety of job and work related activities, training and skill development activities and various educational experiences. The objective is to create a dynamic program within which qualified people can grow, not in accordance with some predetermined "stairway to the stars" but, rather, along a pathway dictated by their own personal interests and abilities. No career development program can create promotional opportunities where none exist. A program such as the one described, however, makes it possible for people to prepare themselves to take full advantage of opportunities as they occur.